

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 346

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, VN, MY

SUBJ: MALAYSIA RESETTLEMENT OF SELF-EVACUATED INDOCHINA
REFUGEES

REF: A) STATE#B) KL 3533

1. AS REPORTED REF B EMBASSY TEAM HAS INTERVIEWED HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS OF THE APPROXIMATELY 1,000 VN REFUGEES ON PULAU PERHENTIAN, ISLAND OFF EAST COAST OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED IN OUR INITAL REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS SOME 500-600 REFUGEES WHO APPEAR ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE INTO THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE THREE CLASSES SET FORTH IN PARA 3 REF A.

2. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON REFUGEES SEEK APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY TO PAROLE THE REMAINING 400-500 VN REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA INTO THE UNITED STATES. OUR ARGUMENTS:
A. WE UNDERSTAND THE REASONING BEHIND THE USG POLICY OF CONSIDERING THESE REFUGEES AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOST GOVT, IN THIS CASE THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA. THE INESCAPABLE FACTS OF THE MALAYSIAN SITUATION ARE, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOM WILL NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SETTLING ANY OF THESE REFUGEES AND GIVEN THE COMMUNAL SITUATION HERE THERE IS
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NO HOPE THAT ANY NON-MUSLIM REFUGEES WIL BE ACCEPTED. WE

HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH GOM OFFICIALS SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF REFUGEES ALMOST TWO MONTHS AGO. WE BELIEVE WE KNOW THE GOM'S ATTITUDES AND POLICY TOWARDS THE REFUGEES AND WE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO CHANGE EITHER THEIR ATTITUDES OR POLICIES. IN FACT, ONCE WE ACCEPT THE 500-600 REFUGEES WHO ARE APPARENTLY ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE INTO THE UNITED STATES, WE EXPECT THE REMAINING 400-500 REFUGEES WILL BE PLACED UNDER PRESSURE BY THE GOM TO RETURN TO VIETNAM OR GO ELSEWHERE, BUT MOST DEFINITELY TO LEAVE MALAYSIA.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE UNHCR WILL BE ABLE TO RESETTLE ANY OF THESE REFUGEES. THE UNHCR REP HERE (A MALAYSIAN) IS COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE AND HAS MADE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT OTHER COUNTRIES ABOUT RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES. ONLY THE FRENCH, CANADIANS, AND AUSTRALIANS HAVE DISPLAYED ANY INTEREST AND THEY WILL TAKE ONLY A HANDFUL.

C. WE BELIEVE THE USG SHOULD GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THESE REFUGEES WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES ESCAPING VIETNAM BUT WERE NOT FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE PICKED UP AT SEA BY AMERICAN FLAG OR AMERICAN-OWNED SHIPS AND WHOSE BOATS WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY SEAWORTHY TO MAKE IT TO SUBIC BAY. THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED GREATER HARDSHIPS, DEPRIVATIONS, AND UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THEIR FUTURES THAN THE REFUGEES WHO WERE FLOWN OUT OF VN ON U.S. AIRCRAFT OR ESCAPED ON U.S. VESSELS. THOSE WHO WERE EVACUATED ON U.S. VESSELS OR AIRCRAFT ARE NOW IN THE UNITED STATES BEING RESETTLED AND STARTING NEW LIVES WHILE THE REFUGEES ON PULAU PERHENTIAN AGONIZE ABOUT AN UNKNOWN FUTURE.

D. THE NUMBERS ARE SMALL. 400-500 WILL REMAIN HERE AFTER THOSE WHO QUALIFY ARE PAROLED INTO THE U.S. IN MALAYSIA, THAILAND, SINGAPORE, AND INDONESIA THE TOTAL IS PROBABLY 2,000-3,000 -- A SMALL INCREMENT TO THE 130,000 REFUGEES ALREADY IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS INCREMENT SHOULD NOT PLACE UNDUE BURDENS ON THE REFUGEE PROGRAM.

DILLON

NOTE BY OC/T: #REF A RECEIVED WITHOUT STATE TELEGRAM NUMBER.

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